

# PROPOSAL EVALUATION

## Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Proposition 50, Chapter 8 IRWM Implementation Step 1

**PIN:** 3816  
**APPLICANT NAME:** Monterey County Water Resources Agency Project  
**PROJECT TITLE:** Salinas Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (SVIRWM)  
**FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$22,811,000  
**COST MATCH:** \$34,216,000  
**TOTAL PROJECT COST:** \$57,027,000

**DESCRIPTION:** The SVWP and Fish Habitat Monitoring Program encompass the following items: Modification of Nacimiento Dam spillway, Modification of operations of Nacimiento and San Antonio reservoirs, Increased recharge of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, Diversion of a portion of water released from the two reservoirs and delivery to agricultural users and Modification of project operations to include benefits to critical in-stream flows to support steelhead fisheries in the Salinas River watershed. The Well No.33 project will relocate a seawater intruded well and incorporate a booster station and reservoir(s) to the Ord Community distribution system. The Soledad Recycling project will recycle wastewater and reduce discharge of nutrients to the Salinas River.

**Question: Consistency with Minimum IRWM Standards - This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated that the IRWM Plan meets the minimum standards.**

Pass

**Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Adopted IRWM Plan and Proof of Formal Adoption. Weighting factor is 1.** 5

A FED was adopted by resolution of the three partner agencies at their respective June, 2005 Board Meetings. The resolutions are signed and included with the application.

**Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Description of Region. Weighting factor is 1.** 3

The region is not clearly shown by a line on the maps provided but is "roughly defined by the boundaries of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin (SVGWB)." The SVGWB is located entirely within Monterey County, the jurisdiction of the applicant, but the upper half of the Salinas River Watershed and Nacimiento Reservoir are in San Luis Obispo County. The applicant does not explain why all of the Salinas River Watershed is not in the region. Coordination and possibility combining into a Salinas Valley IRWMP would integrate the Basin. The only identified ecological process in the region upstream of Monterey Bay (i.e., most of the region) is described as steelhead migration. Riparian and upland ecological processes are not described. Water supply, water quality, economic conditions, and social and cultural conditions are briefly described

**Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Objectives. Weighting factor is 1.** 4

The objectives of the FED are clear: regional issues of water quality, water quantity, flood protection, and environmental enhancement are all addressed. The objectives were developed in a two step fashion which was agreed upon by the partners and stakeholders in the region. Neither the application nor Section 4 of the FED directly discuss conflicts; however, the consensus process used is adequate to determine that conflicts were considered. Several of the identified objectives relate to groundwater management (e.g., stop seawater intrusion into groundwater; increase groundwater recharge through the Salinas River). How these groundwater objectives help a fish habitat monitoring project is uncertain.

**Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Water Management Strategies and Integration. Weighting factor is 1** 4

The FED considers 18 water management strategies and evaluates them on how they might work in combination and individually as relating to planning objectives and projects. Multiple water management strategies are discussed. A matrix is used to show how and to what each strategy relates, which should allow planners to make informed decisions on future projects. 4 projects are proposed under the FED and the list of strategies to be used in each of those projects was provided. Benefits from integrating strategies were listed, but evidence that these benefits are occurring or will occur is not provided.

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### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards -Priorities and Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Regional implementation priorities are provided for short- and long-term timeframes. No discussion of a decision making processes is provided. The application fails to adequately address how the decision making will be responsive to regional changes or how project sequencing may be altered. The application simply states that short-and long-term priorities must be flexible to meet unexpected conditions and that priorities will be modified as needed during updates to the IRWMP.

### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Implementation. Weighting factor is 1.

3

Four projects are identified. The projects mostly focus on 1 of the 4 FED objectives, water supply. General time frames are provided, but planning, design, and permitting of the 4 projects still needs to be completed before implementation can start. It is questionable that this will occur according to the schedule shown, if at all. For example, the Salinas Valley Water Project (SVWP) needs to apply for and receive SWB approval of water rights changes and there is some question regarding the financing mechanism for that project due to litigation. The only institutional structure identified that would ensure FED implementation is the names of the 3 agencies responsible for the 4 projects.

### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Impacts and Regional Benefits. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The FED describes, to only a screening level, the impacts and benefits from the plan implementation for proposed projects. A certified EIR has been completed for the SVWP. Potential negative impacts are discussed, including impacts to other resources such as air and energy. Impacts and benefits to DACs are included. Advantages of regional planning are discussed. Long term impacts were not discussed.

### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Technical Analysis and Plan Performance. Weighting factor is 1.

4

Data and technical methods used to select water management strategies are provided in the application. The FED relies heavily on the Salinas Valley Integrated Ground and Surface water Model (SVIGSM). The SVIGSM is considered a reliable tool that stakeholders trust and has been the basis for assessing the validity of multiple alternatives. Some data gaps have been identified related to steelhead migration and others are expected to be identified during project implementation. The applicant's existing monitoring program will be used to monitor plan performance. The existing groundwater monitoring network is being reviewed and may be modified. It is not clear that this monitoring program will do more than to determine if seawater intrusion is reduced. Other technical feasibility statements are asserted but not well documented.

### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Data Management. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The FED describes data collected by the agencies involved in the plan, and describes the data management system used by the applicant. It is unclear if data collected by the other agencies is included in the applicant's data base. However, all data collected will be shared and is public information. A statement was made that applicant is comparing its methods and protocols with SWB methods and protocols to ensure that data collection and analyses meet and are consistent with all of the SWB standards, but this is somewhat short of integration of data into the SWRCB's programs. Some of the data is available on the web and some is released in regular reports. No discussion was found regarding how data collection will support statewide data needs.

### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Financing. Weighting factor is 1.

3

A financing strategy was presented in the FED. Financing of the major project will be derived from landowners in the Salinas Valley by a cost allocation method established in the late 1990's. However, the status of that financing mechanism is in question due to litigation. Funds for 2 smaller projects will come from borrowing money. The participants of the FED are committed to providing a 60 percent match to any grant funds provided. There is no documentation provided showing on-going support for the proposed projects, other than the cost allocation committee for the Salinas Valley Project.

### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant states that a significant effort has been put forth demonstrating coordination with local land-use planning decision makers. The coordination appears to be limited to providing input to the General Plan Update. To fully demonstrate a close relationship to local planning efforts, evidence is needed that shows that the FED is being integrated into the General Plan. This connection was not shown. None of the local plans are described as addressing FED issues beyond water supply or wastewater.

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### Question: Consistency with IRWM Standards - Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination. Weighting factor is 1.

3

The applicant presents information regarding stakeholder involvement and coordination. However, much of the activity dates back to the 1990's, and it is unclear if it actually pertains to the current FED. A clear list of stakeholders was not included. Potential obstacles to implementation were explained as related to implementation of the IRWMP: 1) water rights petition protest by NOAA Fisheries, 2) a legal challenge by the Salinas Valley Property Owners for Lawful Assessments regarding financing, and 3) a legal change by Water World Resorts, Inc.

Question: Funding Match. This evaluation will focus on whether the applicant has demonstrated the ability to meet the minimum funding match or has requested a waiver or reduction in the funding match.

Pass or Fail. Consensus

### Question: Description of Proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

12

The application describes several projects with significant detail, including goals and objectives. Water quality factors are addressed including a description of the Salinas Groundwater Basin. Monitoring is addressed. Even though no reconnaissance plans, designs, or other documents were submitted that support project feasibility, the rationale for the projects is discussed. Benefits of the projects are generic with few specifics given. Environmental review is discussed in another section and is at various stages of completion for each project. Details in the proposal are hard to compare with the budget details provided. For example, the Blanco Drain system of the SVWP is described in the proposal as not managed by the applicant and it and other project components (e.g. fish screens) are not listed separately in the budget, so it is not clear whether they are proposed for funding or not.

### Question: Project Prioritization. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The project prioritization process used was a 4 step process which included a point system. The process provides a good level of detail which prioritized activities and facilities as they relate to the IRWMP process. The 4 projects were ranked among themselves. However, it is unclear exactly why these projects are the highest priority to address the region's water management needs or that they would provide the most benefit to the region as a whole.

### Question: Cost Estimate. Weighting factor is 1.

2

It is difficult to determine how reasonable the cost estimates are. The cost estimates are not well presented and do not add up, which causes the cost estimates to be unreasonable and difficult to evaluate. For example, the Well No. 33 Project will relocate one well and its storage tank. Construction costs are listed as a single figure of \$8.2 million with no further breakdown or explanation of costs.

### Question: Schedule. Weighting factor is 1.

3

A one page bar chart schedule is general and provided for all four projects. Non-grant funded elements or activities are also described in the schedule. The shortest time frame shown on the schedule is six months (i.e., activities are only described by which half of the year they start and finish in). It is difficult to assess the reasonableness of the schedule.

### Question: Need. Weighting factor is 2.

10

Seawater intrusion is a well documented problem in the project area, which is the primary reason for the proposed projects. Current Water Management Systems are described and fit well with the proposed projects. Economic, environmental, and fiscal impacts are discussed and considered. The primary impact of not completing the projects would be continued seawater intrusion.

### Question: Disadvantaged Communities. Weighting factor is 2.

8

The application clearly shows benefit to specific DACs, how the projects will provide a benefit, and the percentage of DAC population in the region. However, the primary project of this application will benefit all of the population of the Salinas Valley. The degree that DACs will benefit is not totally certain. The project to improve drinking water quality (Well No. 33) benefits mainly a single area (Fort Ord), which is not a DAC.

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Question: Program Preferences. Weighting factor is 1.

4

The projects have multiple benefits, improve local and regional water supply reliability, help meet long-term water quality standards, and reduce pollution. The projects will, to an uncertain extent, serve DAC. The projects are partly integrated and provide multiple benefits to the region. The majority of the benefits would improve water supply reliability by increasing groundwater recharge. Benefits related to addressing impaired waters and maintaining water quality standards are a smaller component of the proposal; water quality impairments due to agricultural sources are not significantly reduced by the proposal. The project to control pollution from the Soledad wastewater treatment plant's effluent has limited impact on dealing with the region's entire set of water quality impairments

**TOTAL SCORE: 89**